

Irradiation Requirements in “The Child Nutrition
And WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004”

PURPOSE:

Inform local educational agencies of the irradiated USDA commodity product requirements.

SCOPE:

Sponsors of the School Breakfast Program and the National School Lunch Program.

DESCRIPTION:

Irradiation has been approved by the Food and Drug Administration as one of several tools that can be used to help protect consumers from foodborne illness. The Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004 contains several requirements regarding irradiated USDA commodity products. The following is a list of the provisions outlined in the Reauthorization Act:

USDA must ensure that:

- Irradiated commodities are made available only at the request of States and school food authorities.
- Reimbursements to schools for such product are equal to reimbursements for non-irradiated products. (In other words, both the non-commodity reimbursement rate as well as the commodity entitlement rate will remain the same. Ordering irradiated beef will have no effect on your reimbursement or entitlement. However, this does not mean that prices for irradiated product will be the same as for non-irradiated product. Prices are dictated by competitive bidding among vendors.)
- States and school food authorities are given model procedures on how to provide irradiation information to school food authorities, parents, and students. This information can be found on the FNS web site at: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/fdd/foodsafety/irrad-edmaterials.htm>.)

USDA, State agencies, and schools must ensure that:

- Irradiated commodities are clearly labeled with the radura symbol or another prominently displayed printed notice of irradiation.
- Irradiated food products are not commingled in containers with non-irradiated foods.

In addition, the Act encourages schools to offer non-irradiated alternatives when irradiated commodities are offered.

USDA highly recommends that schools which choose to serve irradiated USDA commodity product inform parents, students, and others in the school community of that fact, and make it clear that they have a choice on whether or not to consume it. State agencies and schools receiving irradiated product are encouraged to conduct informational and educational activities that provide science-based information about irradiation so that informed decisions can be made about its consumption.

Source: USDA, Food and Nutrition Policy Memorandum #04-25, Dated, July 30, 2004